



# UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh  
Interpretive Center  
Vol 15, Issue 2, Spring 2008

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## Quilt Fundraiser a Big Success

FOAM raised over \$900 to support projects at the Arcata Marsh through offering a handmade wildlife quilt by Open Heart Quilters. The quilt was displayed first at the Interpretive Center, then at the Godwit Days birding festival in April. Jon Haumeder of Arcata (above), whose wife entered his name on 1 ticket, was the lucky winner.

FOAM would like to thank the Open Heart Quilters, Arcata City staff for devising creative ways to display the quilt in both venues, and board members and volunteers who obtained ticket donations. We look forward to collaborating with the City to select worthy projects to receive the funding.

## 2007-08 Board of Directors

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*President:* Sue Leskiw (also UPWIND Editor; Mailing; Publicity; Exhibits; Website) — 442-5444

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Robert Rasmussen (Education; Bylaws) — 822-5305

Lance Torgerson (Education) — 826-1525

## Interpretive Center Closed, School Tours Disappointed

By Sue Leskiw

These two negative occurrences are becoming more common at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, as the number of volunteers to both staff the front desk and lead docent tours is uncomfortably low.

Despite volunteers signing up for two or even three shifts a month, the Interpretive Center doors have had to shut early more often. And when city naturalist Denise Homer has been out for illness, vacation, or meetings, a combination of City staff and volunteers has not always filled the weekday staffing gaps.

School kids and other groups requesting special tours risk being turned away because there are not enough docents to lead these weekday tours. Results from recent FOAM docent training sessions — held each fall and spring — have been disappointing as far as adding active volunteers to the pool.

FOAM is willing to work with anyone interested in leading Marsh tours. For example, say you already know bird and plant ID, but need help with history or wastewater treatment. We have training materials on all these topics that can be borrowed and studied. Why not go on a "shadow tour" with an experienced Saturday 2 pm tour leader, to see what route he/she takes, subjects discussed at certain stops, etc?

Denise individually trains people how to staff the front desk. Don't worry about not knowing the answer to every question a visitor may ask — people are understanding when you tell them you are a volunteer and will write down their question for later resolution.

The Arcata Marsh is a world-renowned, wonderful place to visit. FOAM and the City do NOT want to greet visitors with a closed Interpretive Center or to stymie kids from coming to the Marsh on a class field trip. Please call Denise at 707-826-2359 if you can help.



## Sturdy Scope Sought

You may be aware that the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center recently was broken into. Other than damage to the door, alarm, and phone lines, the biggest loss was the Bushnell spotting scope that the local Audubon chapter had donated many years ago. It was the main one that staff and volunteers put out each day for visitors to look out the west window.

Because the optical equipment gets hard use – according to city naturalist Denise Homer, it's been knocked over so many times she's surprised it hasn't broken or cracked the window! – it doesn't make sense to buy a fancy new scope. But if anyone out there has made such a purchase lately, to replace a durable scope that can survive the hard knocks from AMIC visitors (Denise particularly likes Bushnell), please consider donating your old scope to the Interpretive Center. Call Denise at 707-826-2359 if you can help.

## Thanks, Godwit Helpers

Volunteers who staffed the FOAM booth at the Godwit Days Festival in April were Art Barab, Kana Kobayashi, Sue Leskiw, Bev Post, Florine and Bart Smith, and Janet Zich. Darlene Marlow, Sue Leskiw, Sylvie and Julie Neander, and Veronica Vega welcomed many children plus their parents for art and nature craft activities. Sue Leskiw, Leslie Anderson, and Art Barab helped hang the Student Bird Art entries, and Sue and Tom Leskiw took them down. Art Barab and Dave Couch led field trips for FOAM.

## FOAM Supports Science Camp

The FOAM board voted to underwrite \$300 worth of scholarships to the Arcata Recreation Division's Natural Resources Science Camp. Three sessions of the camp for ages 9-12 are planned for this summer: Forestry (July 14-18), Wildlife Biology (July 21-25), and Aquatics/Fisheries (July 28-August 1). The cost of the camp is \$150 per week, with 20 spots available for each subject. FOAM volunteers also plan to host the campers for a half-day study of water-dwelling invertebrates at the Marsh as part of the Wildlife Biology session. For more information, contact Arcata Recreation at 822-7091.

**THANK YOU, LESLIE  
ANDERSON, FOR UPDATING  
THE LIFE MEMBER PLAQUE IN  
THE LOBBY!**



## Science Fair Award Winner

The winner of FOAM's third annual award at the Humboldt County Science Fair for the best project related to wetlands was Piper Bazard, a 6th-grader at Freshwater School. The purpose of her project, entitled "Drains to the Bay," was to find out which areas of the community – residential, schools, or shopping areas – have the greatest percentage of permeable and impermeable surfaces. She hypothesized that residential areas would be the most permeable, because "they have lots of grass, flowerbeds, and gravel." However, her measurements at six locations found that schools had the most.

In her thank-you letter, Piper noted that her project will be on display at the Humboldt Baykeeper office in Old Town Eureka. "I appreciate your organization and what you do for the community. The science fair was a great experience for me, and I had a lot of fun learning about runoff and doing my research." Piper's sister, Maddie, also sent FOAM a thank-you note, explaining "it felt good to see my sister getting an award for her wonderful science project."

The \$50 prize was awarded in March at a ceremony at Humboldt State University. Judges were Sue and Tom Leskiw.

## New Solar System at Marsh

On April 1, the City of Arcata held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new photovoltaic system at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center. Members of the City Council, City staff, representatives from PG&E, solar installation expert Roger, and FOAM's own Leslie Anderson were on hand for the "Fossil Fool Day" celebration. The 3-kilowatt system – consisting of 14 167-watt panels and an inverter – will cover all electricity usage at the facility. Going solar will avoid nearly a ton of greenhouse gas emissions annually, helping Arcata do its part to combat the global warming crisis. [Photos courtesy of the Arcata Eye.]

## Tentative Date Set for FOAM Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 28 has been selected as the tentative date for our Annual Meeting, Lunch and Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony. The event will include announcement of election results, issuance of the Annual Report, and presentation of Volunteer of the Year award(s). See the next issue of UPWIND for details.



## Student Bird Art Contest Biggest Ever!

By Sue Leskiw

Over 550 local K-12 students pulled out paints, pencils, pastels, or paste to enter the Fifth Annual Student Bird Art Contest held in association with Godwit Days. FOAM co-sponsored the competition with Redwood Region Audubon Society. All art was displayed at the Arcata Community Center during the Festival (April 18-20). Copies of the winners will be hung at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center during May and June. Also, a selection of entries from Orleans and Junction Elementary and Forks of Salmon School was posted at the International Migratory Bird Day celebration in Orleans May 9-10.

Some 56 awards totaling \$600 were given out, thanks to RRAS, FOAM, and a private donor. The number of monetary prizes was increased to 30, plus 16 honorable mentions were chosen. This year, an award for the best depiction of birds in their habitat was instituted at the suggestion of Julie Neander with the City of Arcata's Environmental Services Department, with 10 entries selected. Southstream Art Services in Arcata provided gift certificates to the teachers with the most winning students: Augustine Amaro of Fuente Nueva and John Palmer of Green Point School.

Judges were Leslie Anderson, Louise Bacon-Ogden, Art Barab, Denise Homer, Sue Leskiw, Marsha Mello, and Sara Starr. Art hangers (who spent over 2 hours each push-pinning 552 artworks to the walls) were Leslie Anderson, Louise Bacon-Ogden, Art Barab, Sue Leskiw, and Melvin McKinney; Sue and Tom Leskiw did the removal.

Several teachers wrote about their students' response to the contest: "Many of them really got involved in producing their drawings. Thank you... We had lots of fun preparing for this contest. Thanks for hosting, it was really exciting for the students."

The winners were:

### Kindergarten

1st: Lauren House, Morris Elementary School, Wood Duck

2nd: Lindsey Maher, Alder Grove Charter School, Pileated Woodpecker

3rd: Ada Bavin, Mad River Montessori, Anna's Hummingbird

### Grade 1

1st: Calvin DiMaggio, Mattole Valley Charter School, Common Loon

2nd: Savannah Hirsch, Big Lagoon School, Red-breasted Nuthatch



3rd: Donald Horton, Rio Dell School District After School Program, Steller's Jay

### Grade 2

1st: Mina Mayer, Jacoby Creek School, Red-breasted Nuthatch

2nd: Reid Mather, Maple Creek School, Long-billed Curlew

3rd: Jonathan Archibald, Salmon Creek Community School, Bald Eagle

### Grade 3

1st: Angelica Garrison, Green Point School, Western Grebe

2nd: Roland Carter, Fuente Nueva, California Quail

3rd: Elias Atkinson, Alder Grove Charter School, Spotted Owl

### Grade 4

1st: Natalie Opalach, Arcata Elementary School, Northern Flicker

2nd: Ardiana Halligan, Fuente Nueva, Red-shouldered Hawk

3rd: Zia Oakland, Fuente Nueva, American Goldfinch

### Grade 5

1st: Aidan Carter, Fuente Nueva, Peregrine Falcon

2nd: Margo LaClair, Morris Elementary School, Northern Flicker

3rd: Elizabeth Marshall, Green Point School, Snowy Plover

### Grade 6

1st: Ashley Allgier, Orleans Elementary, American Wigeon

2nd: Jacob Windbigler, Maple Creek School, Great Blue Heron

3rd: Vera Heidmann, Jacoby Creek School, California Quail

### Grade 7

1st: Morgan Tomfohr, Jacoby Creek School, Spotted Owl



2nd: She-ifa Punla-Green, Big Lagoon School, Red-shouldered Hawk

3rd: Reba Thompson, Jacoby Creek School, Chestnut-backed Chickadee

### Grade 8

1st: Cody Wolfberg, Green Point School, Wood Duck

2nd: Justin Heidrich, Jacoby Creek School, Forster's Tern

3rd: Taylor Markin, Junction Elementary School, Purple Finch

### Grades 9-12

1st: Lateal Shumpert, Six Rivers Charter High School, Great Egret

2nd: Sarah Albers, Ferndale High School, Tufted Puffin

3rd: Naomi Anderson, Six Rivers Charter High School, California Quail

### Honorable Mention

Josh Bianchi, Robbie Bollmann, Azoline Gaudin-Dalton, Grant Harman, Bailee Harrison, Kobi Jones, Tehva Kastel, Maya Kaup, Brandyn Martinez, Markeese Mosher, Ursula Newman, Tessa Opalach, Jason Paira, Jasmine Schatz, Gretta Schmidt, Brandon Tripp

### Special Award for Best Depiction of a Bird in Its Habitat

Lana Sharkey, Spotted Owl  
Lexie Allen, American Avocet  
Elizabeth Uemura, Bald Eagle  
Olivia Kline, Peregrine Falcon  
Kaliana Keegan, Anna's Hummingbird

Rhea Burtram, Steller's Jay  
Adam Gunderson, Great Blue Heron  
Summer Goodwin, Cedar Waxwing  
Brandy Goodner, Snowy Plover  
Meagan Hill, White-tailed Kite



## Seasonal Changes Around the Marsh — Spring

By Denise Homer

When I returned from lunch, a birder was looking into the willows in front of the Interpretive Center. "Northern Saw-whet Owl," she said, handing me her binoculars. It looked very fluffy with large brown streaks on its breast and a short tail. The brown flight feathers had large spots of white on them. The length was about 8 inches, approximately the size of a Bullock's Oriole. Apparently, the owl was first spotted eating what appeared to be a Barn Swallow.

I had missed all the action, and only got a very sleepy owl that had its face buried in its wing. I wanted a good look at its face. Patience paid off, as it scratched and looked around briefly before snuggling back into its shoulder feathers.

Northern Saw-whet Owls have a large head with no ear tufts. The yellow eyes had thick, creamy eyebrows and the bill was black. It is considered a nocturnal bird, generally secretive, and more often heard than seen. I think this is the first record of it at the marsh. Three hours later, it was still sleeping in the tree. Stan Harris tells me that's typical behavior for an owl after it eats. The wind has picked up and the branches are swaying, but it doesn't seem to bother the owl.



Last week, I saw an even smaller owl, the Northern Pygmy Owl. A class came into the Interpretive Center and a couple of adults asked me, "What's that little owl outside?" "Where is it?" I asked. "Oh, it's just on the trail in the little pine tree." I was out the door in a flash to check on it. No owl in the pine tree. How about the spruce tree? While I was scanning the spruce tree, movement from the wax myrtle caught my eye.

Northern Pygmy Owls are primarily "sit-and-wait" predators that hunt mainly by vision. It dropped straight out of the tree onto the ground. In the wiggling grass, I could hear the squeals of something caught. I spotted the top of the owl's head and two large gold eyes watching me. It was clearly annoyed. Here was lunch in its talons, and there I was, interfering. It sat still. I stood still. Just then the children came out, and I showed them the owl as they slowly filed by. The owl then pulled its prey further under the tree, out of sight.

My last sighting of a Northern Pygmy Owl at the Marsh was in January 2004. On first glance, one could be confused by which tiny owl one was seeing. But upon closer look, the Northern Pygmy Owl is slimmer in appearance, with a long barred tail with six to seven light stripes. Another difference is the yellow bill. The back of the head looks similar to the front of the head as two black patches looking confusingly like eyes.

Two owls a week apart during the day! It's hard to say which is greater, my joy in seeing them or watching the joy on others' faces as I shared them. Some Native American traditions hold that the owl represents vision and insight. Perhaps John Burroughs caught some of that vision and insight in his words, "To find the universal elements enough; to find the air and the water exhilarating; to be refreshed by a morning walk or an evening saunter; to be thrilled by the stars at night; to be elated over a bird's nest or a wildflower in spring — these are some of the rewards of the simple life."

## Plants of the Marsh

A series by Melinda Bailey

### JAUMEA (JAUMEA CARNOSA)

Many people visit the marsh and notice the freshwater marshes. Fewer people visit the marsh and notice the saltwater marshes. Estimates vary, but in California, less than 10% of the original saltwater marshes are thought to remain. Many were filled in for pasture or commercial development, while others are shrinking still due to pollution and invasive species.

If you observe the tidal areas of the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary closely, you may notice that there still are virtually untouched coastal saltwater marsh ecosystems here. It is important to realize these places exist, so we can protect the little bit that remain. If you enter one of these ecosystems, you will notice three or four dominant plant species. Each one has a different adaptation for living in brackish water and removing excess salt. If you look during this time of year, you may notice a small, yellow composite flower. These flowers belong to *Jaumea*, an uncommon saltwater marsh plant.

*Jaumea* (*Jaumea carnosa*) is a small, native succulent that can resemble ice plant on first glance. It has narrow green leaves on a pinkish stem and is low growing. The leaves are small, typically growing to only 1.5-4 cm long. The stems are sprawling and tend to intertwine with neighboring plants such as *Atriplex*. *Jaumea* spreads by rhizomes and is somewhat inconspicuous even when it blooms. It belongs to the sunflower family; its flowers get no larger than about 2 cm and look like small dandelions. You really need to look for them to see them. There are only two species of this genus in all of the Americas.

Because this plant usually doesn't grow right along the edge of a slough like Pickleweed, you need to go out searching for it. I have had the best luck finding it by taking the railroad track a little ways past Butcher Slough to get to the salt marsh that you can see from the Interpretive Center. For those that frequent the AMWS, this is the salt marsh that is commonly inhabited by Black-shouldered Kites. In delicate places like this marsh, it is important to be mindful, however. All it takes is a few seeds on your socks or shoes and you could introduce a non-native species to the habitat. So walk with care and observe a rare plant in a disappearing ecosystem at the marsh.



Proclamation Presented by the City of Arcata in Recognition of  
WETLANDS MONTH, MAY 2008

**WHEREAS**, citizens and visitors to Arcata hunt, fish, crab, hike, walk and boat in wetlands -- and even more bird watch and photograph wildlife there; and

**WHEREAS**, many humans, birds and mammals eat fish that need to live in wetlands at some time during their life cycle; and

**WHEREAS**, the economic health of many of our industries -- from forests to fisheries, wastewater treatment to cranberries and rice -- depends on wetlands; and

**WHEREAS**, American Wetlands Month celebrates the vital role our nation's wetlands play in our ecological and economic system; and

**WHEREAS**, the observance of American Wetlands Month can do more than any other single event to raise public consciousness about wetland values, and broaden our nation's understanding and appreciation of our natural resources.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that the City Council of the City of Arcata does hereby declare the month of May as Wetlands Month, now and in perpetuity.

Dated: May 7, 2008; Signed by Mark Wheatley, Mayor

## Spring Docent Training Held

FOAM docent training was held on March 8-9. Attendees were instructed in tour leading, history, wastewater treatment, wetlands and invertebrates, plants, and birds by Bob Rasmussen, Lange Torgerson, David Couch, Sean Craig, Melinda Bailey, and Ken Burton. Elliott Dabill organized the session.

Congratulations to the trainees: Alex Aquino, Rachael Bruce, Wayne Butterfield, Sherrie Cooper, Denie Debets, Jenny Hanson, Cindy Moyer, and Mary Severdia.

## JULY ARTIST DARLENE COUCH MARLOW

All my life, I have enjoyed looking closely at things others dismissed. This may have been because I am really near-sighted! But I never had a way to capture what I saw because I seemed to have no artistic talent, even though I took classes in color, light, and watercolors at the St Louis Art Museum.

Then, for our 25th anniversary in December of 2005, my husband Terry gave me a digital camera. At first, it seemed fiendishly complicated. Classes with Leonard Stevens and Justine Smith started me on an artistic journey. My brother Michael Couch and my friend Janine Volkmar, both photographers, are helping me to develop an "eye." The Eureka Photoshop Users' Group is always encouraging, especially Hal Work and Diane Williams.

Several galleries in Eureka, Arts Arcata!, Blake's Books in McKinleyville, and Trinidad Art have been kind enough to show my work since I started exhibiting in July of 2007. The Art of Wine Gallery in Old Town has some pieces now.

My favorite places to take pictures are the Arcata Marsh and my yard in Trinidad. I don't feel like an artist, exactly, but like a person who enjoys noticing small things and sharing them with others.

My thanks to the FOAM Board, especially Leslie Anderson, for the opportunity to show my delight in this wonderful place. I have loved volunteering at the Marsh since I moved to Humboldt County in 2000; all of these photographs were taken here.

## Visitor Log

The AMIC had 1391 walk-in visitors during February, 1656 in March, and 1820 in April.

## What sustains?

By Irene Blair Honeycutt,  
for Monica Diebold

Arcata marshes, for one.  
Hosts of cattails on stalks.  
Green-winged teals arched  
by brown reeds.

Colonies of black-crowned  
night herons huddled in trees,  
resting red eyes for dusk.  
Salt grasses --- brush strokes  
on the surface of No Name Pond.  
Leaves that willow their way

back,  
light up like candles.

Shadows playing origami  
on your shirt

as you sit cradled in an alder,  
leaning away from the path,  
ripples of water  
carrying your thoughts to sea.

Irene Blair Honeycutt lives in Indian Trail, NC. At Thanksgiving, while visiting her niece, Monica, an oceanography student at Humboldt State, she was inspired to write this poem. Irene has published two books of poetry: *It Comes As a Dark Surprise* (1992) and *Waiting for the Trout to Speak* (2002). Her third poetry manuscript is due this fall from Main Street Rag Publishing Company [www.mainstreetrag.com/store/]

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center each Saturday at 2 pm; wastewater tour last Saturday of each month]

May/June --- Winners of Student Bird Art Competition (see article, page 3)

June 12 --- FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

July --- photographs by Darlene Marlow

July 10 --- FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

August --- photographs by Photoshop Users Group

## Recognition & Thanks, February-April 2008

- **New Life Member:** Catherine Walling
- **Best Friends:** Ron & Melanie Johnson
- **Sponsors:** Curtis Canaday (San Francisco); Fred Ferguson; Frances Madrone & Patric Nagle; Carol Moné; Nancy Reichard
- **Friends:** Ken Burton; Luther Cobb & Mary Ellen Mahoney; Kathryn Corbett; Thea Gast; Nina Haedrick; Jenny Hanson; Suzan Logwood; Mary McNelis; Keith Mobbs; Barbara & Chet Ogan; Bev Post; Bill & Nikki Ruff; Frank & Christel Shaughnessy; Lucille Vinyard; Janet & Art Zich

